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the rejection of claims 16 and 20. Applicants therefore traverse the rejection of these claims and request its withdrawal as inappropriate.

Applicants' invention is directed to a constraining band, a container assembly including the constraining band, a barrier unit, a blast resistant container assembly, and an improved container assembly, all of which have fibrous loops or knuckles for connection. The fibrous loops form an integral part of the adjacent surface. At least about 50 weight percent of the fiber component comprises substantially continuous lengths of fiber oriented in the hoop direction of the loops. These loops in combination with a connecting pin can withstand tremendous pressures and resist pulling apart, due to the strength characteristics and orientation of the fibers. This is not found anywhere in the prior art. There is absolutely no suggestion of same.

Claims 1, 2, 8-13, 16-17, 20-21, 25-43 and 46-50 stand rejected under 35 USC§103(a) as being unpatentable over Sacks (USP 5,249,534) in view of Mykleby (USP 4,266,670). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request its withdrawal.

It is the Examiner's position that Sacks discloses the claimed invention except for the loops at the ends of the band and except for the pin. Applicants respectfully disagree.

With reference to all of the claims, Applicants agree that Sacks fails to disclose the loops at the ends of the band and the pin. Additionally, with respect to claims 1, 2, 8-13, 16-17, 20-21 and 25-30, Sacks fails to teach the interrupted band. Further, with respect to claims 8, 10-11, 25, 28-29, 36 and 42, Sacks fails to teach that substantially *all* of the fibrous material in the loops comprises continuous lengths of fiber aligned in parallel *and* in the hoop direction of the loops. Mykleby fails to supply the deficiencies of Sacks.

The interrupted band is defined by Applicants (Example 1, page 46, lines 3-6) as interrupted across the band length, i.e., discontinuous. The band of Sacks is a continuous band and not an interrupted band - see the fabrication procedures detailed in Applicants' specification on page 17, lines 5-9. See also Example 2 on page 45, lines 1-10, wherein the "integrity of the [continuous] bands" is achieved through double-stick tape between fabric layers during winding. Applicants respectfully submit that double-stick tape, used by Applicants to make continuous

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bands, is akin to Sacks' hook and eye (Velcro® brand) fastener that attaches the loose end of a wrapped band *to the wrapped band* and *not to the other end* of the wrapped band. This is an important distinction.

According to the Examiner, Mykleby teaches connecting two ends with a pin extending through loops in each end. Applicants agree. However, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the teaching of Mykleby with Sacks since the band of Sacks has one of its ends covered by subsequent wraps/turns of the band, and thus only one end available.

Claims 3-6 and 22-23 stand rejected under 35 USC§103(a) as being unpatentable over Sacks in view of Mykleby, as applied to claims 1 and 17 above, and further in view of Kolom (USP 5,054,635). Kolom is cited by the Examiner as teaching the use of metal pins. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request its withdrawal.

Claims 3-6 depend directly from claim 1, and claims 22-23 depend directly from claim 17. These claims should therefore be allowable for the reasons set forth above with respect to Sacks and Mykleby. Kolom teaches to connect parts with a pin extending through loops and mentions steel, aluminum, titanium or multi-strand filament as suitable pin materials. There is, however, absolutely nothing in Kolom to suggest the use of a *high strength* fiber for the hinge pin, as is required by Applicants' claims 5 and 23.

Claims 7 and 24 stand rejected under 35 USC§103(a) as being unpatentable over Sacks in view of Mykleby, as applied to claims 1 and 17 above, and further in view of Sholl (USP 3,611,512). Sholl is cited by the Examiner as teaching the use of a rope pin. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request its withdrawal.

Claims 7 and 24 depend from claims 1 and 17, respectively. These claims should also be allowable for the reasons set forth above with respect to Sacks and Mykleby. Furthermore, while Sholl teaches the use of rope or cord to connect two sides of a latch, there is nothing to suggest its use in lieu of a pin for a hinge. The function of the flexible member 24 (element 22 is believed to represent a hole) in Sholl is very different from that of a hinge pin. Member 24 of Sholl is meant to permit a large relative movement of the latch members that it connects. In Applicants' invention, however, the pin is meant to hold the loops together in a manner that

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resists permanently pulling apart. There is thus no motivation to combine Sholl with the other references.

Claims 14-15, 18-19 and 44-45 stand rejected under 35 USC§103(a) as being unpatentable over Sacks in view of Mykleby, as applied to claims 13, 17 and 39 above, and further in view of Gettle et al. (USP 5,225,622). Gettle et al. is cited by the Examiner as teaching the use of aqueous foam. Claims 14-15 and 18-19 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 while claims 44-45 depend directly or indirectly from claim 39. These claims should be allowable for the reasons set forth above with respect to Sacks and Mykleby.

Claim 51 stands rejected under 35 USC§103(a) as being unpatentable over Chavez (USP 5,033,161) in view of Sholl (USP 3,611,512). Chavez teaches hinge knuckles connected by a pin. Sholl, however, teaches a flexible member for connecting latch members. It is respectfully submitted that there is no motivation to combine these references since the function of the connecting member is different. This rejection should therefore be withdrawn.

Claim 51 further stands rejected under 35 USC§103(a) as being unpatentable over Sacks (USP 5,249,534) in view of Chavez (USP 5,033,161). Sacks teaches a wrapping strip, preferably formed from fibrous material, in conjunction with a container. Chavez teaches hinge knuckles connected by a pin. There is absolutely nothing in either of Sacks or Chavez to suggest that a pin can be formed of flexible material selected from the group consisting of rope, roving, unitape, shield, braid, belt, fabric and combinations thereof. It is respectfully submitted that this rejection is inappropriate and should be withdrawn.

Applicants believe that this last rejection should have been applied to claim 52. If so, there is absolutely nothing to suggest that the fibrous material forming the wrapping strip or cover for the Sacks container could or should be fashioned into hinge halves terminating in knuckles for connection by a pin (Chavez). Furthermore, the Sacks' wrapping strip covers one end (or hinge half) so that there would be no motivation to combine Sacks with Chavez. Therefore, a rejection of claim 52 on the basis of these two references would be inappropriate.

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Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing remarks place the claims in condition for allowance and request that this case be passed to issue. If there are any unresolved issues, the Examiner is invited to telephone Applicants' attorney.

Respectfully submitted,
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile 703-305-3579 to Examiner Elishway, on May 17, 2001.

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